



Press release No. 9/2011

Ombudsman: Commission apologises for forgetting Easter and Christmas in school diary

2 May 2011

The European Ombudsman investigates complaints about maladministration in the EU institutions and bodies. Any EU citizen, resident, or an enterprise or association in a Member State, can lodge a complaint with the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman offers a fast, flexible and free means of solving problems with the EU administration.

For more information:
www.ombudsman.europa.eu

Contact:
Gundi Gadesmann,
Media and External
Relations Officer,
T. +32 2 284 26 09
gundi.gadesmann@ombudsman.europa.eu

The European Ombudsman, P. Nikiforos Diamandouros, has closed a case after the European Commission apologised for omitting Christian holidays in a school diary it had published for 2010/2011. This follows a complaint from an Irish priest who submitted that the diary did not mention Easter and Christmas, although it contained certain non-Christian holidays, such as the Jewish and Islamic New Years.

Irish priest complains about missing Christian holidays

Every year, the European Commission produces the Europa Diary for students in secondary schools in the EU. It serves as a tool for homework and other notes. The edition for the school year 2010/2011 was distributed to more than three million students.

In January 2011, an Irish priest complained to the Ombudsman that the Commission had omitted Christian holidays, such as Easter and Christmas, while including holidays of other religions in the diary. He claimed that the Commission should apologise for the error and recall the already distributed edition for 2010/2011.

In February 2011, the Ombudsman informed the complainant that the Commission had published an apology for what it called the regrettable error of omitting Christian holidays in the diary on its website. Furthermore, the Commission sent a corrigendum to all teachers who had ordered the 2010/2011 edition. It included a one-page addition to the diary showing the main public holidays of the EU Member States.

In the Ombudsman's view, the actions which the Commission took to rectify the error were reasonable. He further considered that it would be disproportionate to reprint the 2010/2011 edition. Accordingly, the Ombudsman closed the case without further inquiries.

The Ombudsman's complete decision is available at: <http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/cases/decision.faces/en/10259/html.bookmark>